

Among the poets, I shall notice only the two or three pre-eminent ones of the Epic class. Homer, you know, is the favourite of the whole civilized world ; and it is many centuries since there needed one additional word of homage to the prodigious genius displayed in the Iliad. The object of inquiry is, what kind of predisposition will be formed toward Christianity in a young and animated spirit, that learns to glow with enthusiasm at the scenes created by the poet, and to indulge an ardent wish, which that enthusiasm will probably awaken, for the possibility of emulating some of the principal characters ? Let this susceptible youth, after having mingled and burned in imagination among heroes, whose valour and anger flame like Vesuvius, who wade in blood, trample on dying foes, and hurl defiance against earth and heaven; let him be led into the company of Jesus Christ and his disciples, as displayed by the evangelists, with whose narrative, I will suppose, he is but slightly acquainted before. What must he, what can he, do with his feelings in this transition ? He will find himself flung as far as " from the centre to the utmost pole ; " and one of these two opposite exhibitions of character will inevitably excite his aversion. Which of them is that likely to be, if he is become thoroughly possessed with the Homeric passions ?

Or if, reversing the order, you will suppose a person to have first become profoundly interested by the New Testament, and to have acquired the spirit of the Saviour of the world, while studying the evangelical history; with what sentiments will *he* come forth from conversing with heavenly mildness, weeping benevolence, sacred purity, and the eloquence of divine wisdom, to enter into a scene of such actions and characters, and to hear such maxims of merit and glory, as those of Homer ? He would be still more confounded by the transition, had it been possible for him to have entirely escaped that deep depravation of feeling which can think of crimes and miseries with little emotion, and which we have all acquired from viewing the prominent portion of the world's history as composed of scarcely any ridiculous to represent the martial enthusiasm of ancient historians and poets as counteracting the *doctrines* of the gospel, meaning by the term those dictates of truth that do not directly involve moral distinctions.